


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 United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Public Affairs

Selected Speeches and News Releases

January 18 - January 25, 1990

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USDA SETS DEADLINE ON INVITATIONS ISSUED UNDER EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced that Export Enhancement Program invitations issued before Aug. 1, 1989, will expire at the end of fiscal 1990. Offers under these invitations will not be considered after 3 p.m., Sept. 28, 1990.

Initiatives operating under invitations issued after Aug. 1, 1989, are not affected by this announcement. Invitations issued after Aug. 1, 1989, specify explicit dates of expiration. Those dates remain unchanged by this announcement.

Invitations which expire may be reexamined by USDA on a case-by-case basis for continued participation by EEP.

Invitations set to expire Sept. 28 are:

Wheat, GSM-500

Algeria	Jordan	West African countries
Bangladesh	Lebanon	Yugoslavia
Bulgaria	Mexico	Zaire
Burundi	Morocco	
Colombia	Nigeria	
Finland	Poland	
German Democratic Republic	Romania	
India	Tunisia	
Iraq	Turkey	

Vegetable Oil, GSM-502

India
Tunisia

Semolina, GSM-503

Algeria

Feed grains, GSM-504

Israel
Hungary
Jordan
Poland
Romania
Saudi Arabia
Switzerland
Tunisia
Turkey

Table eggs, GSM-506

Dominican Republic
Hong Kong
Iraq
Near East countries

Frozen poultry, GSM-508

Egypt
Gulf countries
Iraq
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
West African countries
Zaire

Wheat flour, GSM-505

Benin
Central African Republic
Iraq
Sri Lanka
Zaire
Zanzibar

Barley malt, GSM-507

Algeria
Burundi
Cameroon
Central American countries
Nigeria
Peru
Philippines
Venezuela

Milled rice, GSM-509

Turkey

For more information, call the Commodity Credit Corp. Export Credits Office, (202) 382-9240.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

#

NATIONAL GRASSLANDS GRAZING FEE SET FOR 1990

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—F. Dale Robertson, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, today announced an increased fee for grazing livestock on national grasslands in nine Great Plains states, due to an increase in the economic value of grazing.

Effective March 1, monthly rates for grazing livestock on grasslands in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming will increase 57 cents to \$2.86 per head per month.

Grazing fees for national grasslands are determined through a formula which adjusts a 1966-base fair market value of livestock grazing use and occupancy of national grasslands. Factors considered are changes in private grazing land lease rates; the difference between total costs to livestock owners of grazing on public and private lands; beef cattle prices received by livestock producers; and the costs of producing livestock. The fee for each national grassland is determined after deducting allowances from the annual grazing value for investments in range improvements and costs incurred by grazing associations for work done for the Forest Service. The increase in economic grazing value for 1990 is 5 percent.

The increased grazing fee is expected to affect over 1,000 permittees who graze livestock on national grasslands. It is estimated that more than 200,000 animals are grazed on national grasslands every year.

Fees are charged per "head month," which is a month's use and occupancy of range by one weaned or adult cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse, burro, or mule; or five sheep or goats.

Susan Hess (202) 447-3760

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR USSR AND IRAQ

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the following activity:

—Export sales of 400,000 metric tons of wheat (300,000 tons of hard red winter and 100,000 tons of hard red spring) for delivery to the USSR during the 1989-90 marketing year and under the seventh year of the

Long Term Grain Supply Agreement signed Aug. 25, 1983 and extended Nov. 28, 1988;

—Export sales of 100,000 tons of soybean meal for delivery to the USSR during 1989-90 and under the seventh year of the LTA; and

—Export sales of 317,965 tons of corn for delivery to Iraq. Of the total, 202,342 tons is for delivery during 1989-90 and 115,623 tons is for delivery during 1990-91.

The marketing year for wheat began June 1, for corn began Sept. 1 and for soybean meal began Oct. 1.

Sales of wheat and corn to the USSR for delivery during the seventh year of the agreement (which began Oct. 1, 1989 and ends Sept. 30, 1990) total 13,626,200 tons, of which wheat is 2,630,000 tons and corn is 10,996,200 tons. Sales of soybeans total 217,900 tons and soybean meal total 995,000 tons. In addition, sales of barley total 7,300 tons.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

#

“MEDICAL CHECKUP” FOR COTTON TODAY COULD MEAN HEALTHIER CROP TOMORROW

WASHINGTON—Plant doctors at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service are using a medical tool to reap a bumper crop of data on cotton plants.

Farmers may someday use the tool to track their crops’ daily progress. Meanwhile, ARS scientists are using the tool’s data to hasten the search for tomorrow’s superior cottons. The agency is the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s chief science arm.

Medical technicians have for years used the tool—called a microplate reader—so physicians can diagnose blood disease and evaluate hormone levels. But agricultural researchers are taking different cues from its rapid measurements of starch and hormone levels in plant leaves, says plant physiologist Donald L. Hendrix. He works in the cotton physiology unit

of the ARS Western Cotton Research Laboratory in Phoenix, Ariz. “We can speed work in several areas, like finding cotton plants that need less irrigation and predicting how the crop would fare under higher levels of carbon dioxide expected in the 21st century,” he said. Other Phoenix researchers use the microplate to track changes in plant hormones. Hendrix switches it on to measure daily starch levels in leaf samples from dozens of experimental cotton plants. “More starch means more sugars and more energy for growth and other processes,” he said.

During the day, leaves store most of the carbon they absorb in starches—long chains of sugar molecules. At night, starch is broken down into simple sugars. Taking leaf samples at dusk and dawn, Hendrix uses the reader to find out quickly how much starch changed to sugar overnight.

For some studies Hendrix tracks starch conversion in cotton grown in outdoor chambers under various levels of CO₂. The aim is to predict how the greenhouse effect could affect U.S. farmers in the 21st century.

Hendrix says current uses of the microplate’s data on starch or hormones include screening cotton plants—with an eye toward potential new commercial varieties—to find those that:

- mature earlier and more uniformly instead of over a period of several weeks. That would give growers a higher yield of harvestable fiber and lower production costs. It also would reduce needs for irrigation water and narrow the window of time when the crop is exposed to insects, weather and other environmental threats.

- tolerate warm nighttime temperatures in the Southwest that reduce the yield of cotton fiber by making some pollen sterile.

- put more energy into growing and ripening bolls instead of growing leaves and stems.

- retain a larger proportion of young bolls (some bolls fall off before they mature).

Someday, Hendrix said, farmers’ cooperatives may use micro-readers “to give growers a daily diary of the crop’s performance and needs.”

Other future uses might include tracking starch conversion and hormones in food and other fiber crops. Microplate readers also might measure changes in other plant chemicals, such as those that ward off insects, enable a plant to withstand drought or make some forage plants unappealing to livestock.

Linked to a computer, the reader enables Hendrix and colleagues to process five times more samples in the same time—300 to 400 a week

instead of 50. “It can measure sugars from 96 samples a minute in amounts as small as 10 nanograms. That’s less than one billionth of an ounce,” he said.

Analyzing a full season’s data by older methods usually means waiting until next year for all results. But with the reader, “we can chart the plants’ daily progress through the current season. How it improves our view of starch conversion is like comparing a still photo to animation,” Hendrix said.

The device has already helped him pinpoint, for the first time, changes in leaf starch during a key phenomenon, called “cut-out,” in upland cotton.

“In cut-out, the plant suddenly and drastically slows its starch conversion,” he said. “Instead, it pours almost all its energy into maturing its current stock of bolls. Farmers would like to have as many bolls as possible set before cut-out, because bolls that form after that don’t amount to much. Plus, if the farmer could alter the period when bolls set, he would be able to reduce the crop’s exposure to pests and its needs for fertilizer, pesticides and costly irrigation water.

“The typical Arizona cotton crop is irrigated seven times,” he said. “At a rate of 7 or 8 inches of water per acre, each irrigation uses 100 billion gallons statewide. That’s how much water the city of Phoenix uses in two years.”

Recent tests at the lab indicate that techniques for timing the irrigation better can reduce water use up to 12 inches over the season.

Gene Guinn, plant physiologist in the cotton physiology unit, uses the microplate reader to measure abscisic acid, a plant hormone. It affects the opening and closing of stomates—leaf pores that take in water and carbon dioxide and release oxygen and wastes.

Guinn is also analyzing ethylene and cytokinin hormones. The hormone types—along with environmental factors like weather and insects—determine if a plant will retain or drop its young cotton bolls.

Hendrix got the idea for using a microplate reader in Britain a few years ago, when he saw scientists using one to measure tomato sugars. In the procedure, he uses a hole punch to take samples of leaf tissue. An alcohol bath removes a sample’s soluble sugars. An enzyme then converts remaining starches into sugars, measured by the microplate reader. Hendrix feeds the data into a computer to generate graphs and spreadsheets.

Jim De Quattro (301) 344-4296

#

USDA OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES REPORT ON OCEAN SHIPPING ACT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Transportation has issued proceedings from a series of workshops on the Ocean Shipping Act of 1984, a law that affects the rates and services on more than \$14 billion worth of agricultural exports shipped by sea.

Entitled, "The Shipping Act of 1984: Focus on Agriculture," the report includes speeches from agricultural shippers and ocean carriers on issues such as freight rates, service contracts, conference antitrust issues and the impact of the act on the competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products in foreign markets.

According to Martin F. Fitzpatrick, OT administrator, export markets offer great opportunities for many shippers of agricultural products. "But capitalizing on these opportunities depends on the availability of cost-competitive and high quality ocean shipping services," he said. "Some agricultural exporters now are paying 50 percent more for ocean freight than they did just three years ago."

Fitzpatrick said the workshops, which were held in 1988 and 1989 in Fresno, Calif., Houston, Texas, and Lakeland, Fla., provided shippers with a forum to discuss problems and find potential solutions to those problems.

Fitzpatrick said OT is taking an active interest in this year's review of the act by a Congressional advisory commission. "Our goal is to inform agricultural exporters about the review, discuss potential avenues for industry involvement, and evaluate the impact of the act on agricultural exports," he said.

The report was prepared to help demonstrate the range of opinions held by agricultural shippers and carriers on these issues.

Copies of the 96-page report can be obtained by writing USDA-OT, P.O. Box 96575, Washington, D.C., 20090-6575, or by calling (202) 653-6215.

Larry Mark (202) 447-3977

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR UNKNOWN

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 101,600 metric tons of corn for delivery to unknown destinations during the 1989-90 marketing year.

The marketing year for corn began Sept. 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM, eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas McDonald (202) 447-3273

#

USDA TO INCREASE DAIRY PRODUCT GRADING AND INSPECTION FEES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Effective Jan. 28, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will increase certain fees for its “voluntary” (i.e., industry solicited) grading and inspection services funded by the dairy industry.

The increase reflects a 4.2-percent inflation in program operating costs, a mandated 3.6-percent cost-of-living rise in federal salaries scheduled to take effect in January 1990, and a 13.3-percent increase in the government’s cost for employee health benefits, said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service.

The fee increases are as follows:

—from \$36 to \$38 per hour for intermittent grading and inspection services, with travel and per diem costs continuing to be charged in addition to the hourly charge.

—from \$32 to \$34 per hour for “continuous resident” grading and inspection, i.e., for a grader-inspector assigned to a plant permanently.

Dairy inspectors supervise sanitation of dairy plants, and graders see that the products to carry USDA grade labels meet the standards of quality those labels signify. Under law, the dairy grading program, like other voluntary commodity grading programs, is user-fee funded and must balance its fee income against its costs, Haley said. The increases

will help ensure that the dairy grading and inspection program is financially self-supporting.

These changes will be published as a final rule in the Jan. 24 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Dairy Grading Section, Dairy Grading and Standardization Branch, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2750-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 382-9381.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON MODIFIED PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SHELLLED PISTACHIO STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on a modified proposal to establish U.S. standards for grades of shelled pistachio nuts.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposal supplements one published in the June 14, 1989 Federal Register. The earlier proposal reflected the U.S. pistachio industry's request for shelled pistachio standards, Haley said. However, comments received on the earlier proposal indicated the need for more classification of sizes of nuts as they affect grades.

The modified proposal will appear as a proposed rule in the Jan. 24 Federal Register. Comments, to be postmarked or courier-dated no later than Feb. 23, should be sent to the Standardization Branch, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, Rm. 2056-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the proposed rule are available at that address.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

U.S. TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO BUY 395.1 MILLION POUNDS OF 1990 BURLEY TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—U.S. cigarette manufacturers plan to purchase 395.1 million pounds (farm sales weight) of 1990-crop burley tobacco, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Keith Bjerke, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 require major domestic cigarette manufacturers to report annually to USDA their intended purchases of burley tobacco from U.S. auction markets and producers.

Data on intended purchases is used to determine, in part, USDA's annual burley tobacco marketing quota. The other two factors determining the quota are average annual burley exports for the preceding three years quota will be announced by Feb. 1.

Bjerke said annual burley exports for 1987, 1988 and 1989 averaged 161.6 million pounds.

In 1989, manufacturers' intended purchases totaled 427 million pounds.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 9.76 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 9.02 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 8.91 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.88 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$6.03 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$5.62 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$5.42 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Jan. 30, at 3 p.m. EST, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR JORDAN AND UNKNOWN

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the following activity:

—Export sales of 100,000 metric tons of hard red winter wheat for delivery to Jordan during the 1989-90 marketing year;

—Export sales of 100,000 tons of corn for delivery to unknown destinations during 1989-90.

The marketing year for wheat began June 1 and for corn began Sept. 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

#

USDA REVISES EXPORT PROGRAM FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced a revised Dairy Export Incentive Program to help exporters of U.S. butterfat compete in 40 countries.

Under DEIP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture offers a bonus to exporters for commercial exports of U.S. butterfat. With today's revision, exporters will receive their bonuses in generic certificates. Previously, bonuses were limited to selected lots of dairy inventory owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The following country allocations will be valid until the end of fiscal

1990, as provided for in the invitation for offers. Allocated amounts are in metric tons.

Algeria	5,000	Ghana	250
Bahamas	500	Guadeloupe	250
Bahrain	500	Hong Kong	1,000
Cameroon	500	Indonesia	1,000
Canary Islands	500	Israel	500
Chile	500	Ivory Coast	500
Cyprus	500	Jordan	1,000
Egypt	5,000	Kuwait	1,500
Gabon	250	Madagascar	250
Malta	250	Senegal	1,000
Martinique	500	Singapore	500
Morocco	2,500	Somalia	250
Mozambique	250	Taiwan	1,000
Netherlands Antilles	1250	Thailand	1,500
Nigeria	1,000	Trinidad & Tobago	1,000
Oman & Muscat	1,000	Tunisia	1,000
Pakistan	500	Turkey	1,000
Qatar	500	United Arab Emirates . . .	1,000
Reunion	250	Yemen	1,000
Saudi Arabia	5,000	Yugoslavia	1,000

Total: 41,750 metric tons

The DEIP was mandated by the Food Security Act of 1985, amended by the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 and extended by the Hunger Relief Act of 1988.

Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information call George Galasso, (202) 382-9274, or L.T. McElvain, (202) 447-3224. For a tape-recorded message announcing the issuance of invitations under DEIP call the CCC Operations Hotline, (202) 447-2042.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

#

MOROCCO ELIGIBLE FOR MORE VEGETABLE OIL UNDER EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced an opportunity for sales of an additional 60,000 metric tons of U.S. vegetable oil to Morocco under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program.

Sales of vegetable oil will be made to buyers in Morocco at competitive world prices. The export sales will be made through normal commercial channels with the assistance of commodities from the inventory of USDA's Commodity Credit Corp. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in the Moroccan market.

This allocation will be valid for a one-year period as provided for in the invitation for offers. Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information telephone George Galasso, (202) 382-9274, or Larry McElvain, (202) 447-3224. For a tape-recorded message announcing the issuance of invitations under EEP, call the CCC Operations Hotline, (202) 447-2042.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

#

AUSTRALIAN INSECTS CANDIDATES FOR WEED WAR IN EVERGLADES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—American and Australian scientists are trading water weed-eating insects in a deal that could relieve a threat to the Florida Everglades.

U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists obtained six species of insects from their counterparts in Australia, the latest in an exchange that started in the mid-1970s. All six species are "possible candidates" for controlling the paperbark tree in Everglades National Park, said Ted D. Center of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Paperbark tree, known as U.S. Melaleuca, grows in swamps or on cleared land and out-competes the park's native vegetation for growing room, said Center, a research entomologist at the ARS Aquatic Weed Control Laboratory in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Another problem is that

water absorbed by the paperbark is released four times faster than native sawgrass, he said.

Center said fellow research entomologist Joseph Balciunas has been assigned to study the anti-paperbark potential of the insects at an ARS temporary satellite office in Townsville, Australia.

Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) supplied the six species. Only a short time earlier, Center's lab had turned over to CSIRO scientists a third insect to battle waterhyacinth.

That insect, new to Australia, is a weed-eating weevil called *Neochetina bruchi*, released in 1974 to states by the Fort Lauderdale lab to control waterhyacinth. Australia already had received the weevil, *N. eichhorniae*, and a moth, *Sameodes albiguttalis*, to combat the growth of waterhyacinth.

Tony Wright, a CSIRO biologist who stopped at the Fort Lauderdale lab in 1989 to check out insects, said waterhyacinth infestation is so serious that it threatens Australia's already limited water supply.

"Water is Australia's most valuable resource," Wright said. "Anything that threatens water quality and supply, threatens Australia."

Meanwhile, *Mimosa pigra*, a tree-like weed, covers 400-square kilometers of Australian wetlands. The weed has become a problem in Australia's Kakadu National Park, a major tourist attraction and a site in the film "Crocodile Dundee."

If the weed goes unchecked, *M. pigra* will eventually overturn other vegetation that is the park's attraction. The weed also is a problem in the Everglades, Wright said.

"Although the U.S. is not my country, I still feel afraid for the future of the Everglades," he said.

Center said the Florida Department of Natural Resources has asked ARS to study the feasibility of using insect controls for the mimosa weed in the state. Australian scientists have found the plant's natural enemies in Central America and Mexico, he said.

On another joint venture, Center said the Fort Lauderdale lab and CSIRO are evaluating an Argentine-native weevil imported from Australia for fighting waterlettuce in southern states. USDA scientists found the weevil, but it was introduced first in Australia where the problem was larger.

Fort Lauderdale researchers are studying the weevil's performance at three test sites in Florida, Center said. Preliminary results indicate the weevil will equal its success achieved in Australia, he said.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2739

#

PACA ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGREES ON SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—With one meeting remaining, the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) Advisory Committee agreed on a number of important initiatives at its meeting in Phoenix, Ariz., on Jan. 18. These initiatives will be part of the group's recommendations due May 1 to the Congress and the secretary of agriculture, according to Charles R. Brader, an official with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service and chairman of the committee.

"Implementation of many of the committee's proposals would require changing the act," Brader said.

The proposals adopted by the 20-member advisory committee included:

- modification of the types of firms subject to PACA licensing requirements;
- provision for monetary penalties for licensees who fail to make full payment according to their contracts;
- elimination of responsibility for product misrepresentation for those who could not have known that the product was misrepresented;
- authorization for the investment of administrative fund operating balances in interest-bearing accounts with proceeds accruing to the program fund; and
- increasing the monetary penalty for firms which operate without a license.

A number of important issues remain for resolution at the fifth and final meeting of the committee, scheduled for Dallas, Texas, on March 2 and 3, said Brader. "Significant issues still remain, but based on the committee's prior record of productivity and cooperation, I know those issues will be resolved prior to delivery of the group's final report in May," he said.

In meeting with the advisory group, Daniel D. Haley, AMS administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, conveyed the importance of the committee's activities. The agency oversees PACA for USDA.

The PACA program has for 60 years fostered fair trading practices in the marketing of perishable agricultural commodities and is financed by license fees paid for by some 15,400 users. In February 1989, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter appointed the 20-member PACA advisory committee to review the PACA program to ensure efficiency and equitable treatment among various segments of the industry covered by act. In establishing the committee of industry representatives, the secretary carried out a provision in an August 1988 amendment to the PACA.

The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act prohibits unfair and fraudulent practices in the marketing of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, and requires that dealers, commission merchants, brokers, shippers, and growers' agents handling these commodities in interstate or foreign commerce be licensed.

The committee convened three times in 1989 and submitted an interim report to the Congress in September 1989. Information on the committee's activities is available from John D. Flanagan, executive secretary of the committee and chief of the PACA Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2095-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 447-2272.

George Clarke (202) 447-8998.

#

AFLATOXIN THREAT CONSIDERED SLIGHT FOR '89 CORN

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—The U.S. corn crop for 1989 is likely to escape the high levels of aflatoxin contamination that hurt the 1988 crop, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist says.

The weather conditions necessary for unusually high aflatoxin levels generally were not present nationally last year, according to microbiologist Donald T. Wicklow of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Consequently, no widespread outbreaks have been reported in the months following the corn harvest, as occurred in 1988.

Wicklow, based at the ARS Northern Regional Research Center at Peoria, Ill., works on mycotoxin research, including aflatoxin. Aflatoxin, a toxic chemical produced by two soil fungi, *Aspergillus flavus* and *A. parasiticus*, has been linked to cancer in laboratory animals.

He said *A. flavus* fungus has been most commonly found in peanuts and corn, especially in hot and dry weather as in 1988.

But in Iowa, the nation's leading corn state with estimated production of more than 1.4 billion bushels last year, the scenario seen last summer wasn't likely to lead to aflatoxin contamination, said Charles R. Hurburgh. Hurburgh is an assistant professor of agricultural engineering at Iowa State University at Ames.

"August is the key month, when the grain is making its dry matter, the 'food' for the aflatoxin," he said. "But we had a reasonably cool August, with nighttime lows in the 60s. That's not going to produce aflatoxin."

By comparison, Hurburgh said, temperatures in Iowa in August 1988 hit the 100-degree mark during the day and stayed in the 80s at night.

"Evening temperatures are critical for the fungus," Wicklow explained. "If the temperatures reach 80 to 85 degrees F at night when the corn kernels are maturing, the plant reacts in a way that can lead to stress cracks in the seed. These are an open door to the fungus."

According to Wicklow, concerns about aflatoxin often focus on the southeastern states, in part because of that region's typically hotter weather during the period when the corn is maturing. But statistics for 1988 show that of the four southeastern states—North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida—only North Carolina produced as much as 1 percent of the U.S. corn crop, with 1.6 percent of the nation's approximately 4.93 billion bushels.

Corn will not necessarily be contaminated simply because it was grown in a field that previously produced aflatoxin-tainted corn, Wicklow said. He also said that corn will not pick up aflatoxin from being stored in bins that had held contaminated corn. Nor does transporting corn in ships that previously carried aflatoxin-contaminated grain pose a problem.

USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service will check grain for aflatoxin upon request by either the buyer or seller of the grain, an FGIS spokesman said. Private industry inspectors may conduct checks if they suspect a problem exists.

While the aflatoxin threat of 1988 appears to be history, USDA's Agricultural Research Service scientists continue a variety of research projects aimed at stopping the toxin.

Efforts include the breeding of corn lines with reduced susceptibility to *A. flavus* and breeding corn for tighter husks to cut down on insect-damaged kernels in which the bulk of aflatoxin contamination occurs. Natural chemicals have been discovered that inhibit the growth of *A. flavus* and production of aflatoxin. Researchers also are exploring the possible use of a highly competitive strain of *Aspergillus* mold that does not produce aflatoxin and could keep toxin-producing strains out of the field.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

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PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR PAKISTAN

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 26,000 metric tons of soybean oil for delivery to Pakistan during the 1989-90 marketing year.

The marketing year for soybean oil began October 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 20,000 metric tons or more of soybean oil, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than 20,000 tons must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

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USDA ANNOUNCES WATER QUALITY INITIATIVES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—More than \$17 million will be provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture this year to assist states in improving water quality in identified agricultural watershed areas in 37 states, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter announced today.

“This is a part of USDA's accelerated water quality effort for the 1990s and active support of the president's 1990 Water Quality

Initiative,” Yeutter said. “We’re scheduling 37 hydrologic unit areas this year and anticipate another 37 areas in 1991.”

Criteria considered in selecting the areas included: (1) agriculture-related problems; (2) surface and ground water effects; and (3) feasibility of treatment.

The hydrologic unit areas were selected by the Education and Technical Assistance Committee of USDA’s Water Quality Working Group. The committee includes representatives from eight USDA agencies as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Geological Survey.

“In addition, we’re planning other cooperative efforts, as outlined in USDA’s 5-Year Water Quality Action Plan,” Yeutter said.

These include the selection and funding of eight additional projects to demonstrate farmers’ willingness to adopt newly developed conservation measures that more effectively manage agricultural uses of nutrients and pesticides.

In addition, USDA assistance will be targeted to regional programs that address multi-state water quality problems, such as in the Great Lakes, Puget Sound, the Gulf of Mexico, the Chesapeake Bay and the Tennessee River Valley. As estuaries of national significance are identified and designated by the Environmental Protection Agency, they too will receive additional USDA assistance.

USDA also will develop new pesticide and nutrient use databases with input from other federal and state agencies. These databases will be linked with others to assess the impacts of water quality management activities at the national and state levels.

“On all of these projects, we’ll be working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and with state and local agencies to solve identified and prioritized problems,” Yeutter said.

The water quality improvements will be implemented cooperatively by USDA’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Extension Service and Soil Conservation Service.

ASCS will provide \$7 million in cost-share assistance for water quality improvements which will be accomplished by installing practices such as animal waste control facilities, sod waterways, water management systems, and integrated crop management.

ES will provide \$4,550,000 in education assistance, including specific recommendations on the use of nutrients and pesticides.

SCS will provide \$5,365,000 in technical assistance, including direct support for increased SCS and conservation district staffing.

The Economic Research Service will provide staff support in the amount of \$150,000 to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of alternative management practices.

The 1990 hydrologic units for 1990 were chosen principally from areas identified in assessment reports prepared by states in response to Section 319 of the Water Quality Act of 1987. They are:

State	Name of Project
Alabama	Sand Mountain/Lake Guntersville
Arizona	Casa Grande/Coolidge
Arkansas	Moore's Creek
California	Westside San Joaquin Valley
Connecticut	Housatonic River
Delaware	Inland Bays
Florida	Middle Suwannee River
Illinois	Illinois River Sands
Iowa	Union Grove and Black Hawk
Indiana	Upper Tippecanoe
Louisiana	Bayou Queue De Tortue
Maine	Long/Cross Lakes
Massachusetts	Buzzards Bay
Michigan	Sycamore Creek
Minnesota	St. Peter/Prairie Du Chien
Mississippi	Tangipahoa River
Montana	Godfrey Creek
Nebraska	Elm Creek
New Hampshire	Great Bay
New Mexico	Dona Ana/Sierra
New York	East Sidney Lake
North Carolina	Goshen Swamp
North Dakota	Bowman/Haley
Ohio	Indian Lake
Oklahoma	Battle Branch
Oregon	Ontario
Puerto Rico	Lake Loiza

Rhode Island	Pawcatuck
South Carolina	Camping Creek
South Dakota	Richmond Lake
Tennessee	N. Fork Creek and Fall Creek
Texas	Upper North Bosque
Utah	Little Bear River
Vermont	Lower Missisquoi
West Virginia	Greenbriar River
Wisconsin	Plover/Whiting Wellhead Area
Wyoming	Ocean Lake

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THIS WEEK’S HONEY-LOAN REPAYMENT LEVELS
UNCHANGED

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—Producers may repay their 1988 and 1989 honey price-support loans at the following levels, according to Keith D. Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation:

Weekly Honey-loan Repayment Levels, color and class, cents per pound

	1989-crop	1988-crop
Table		
White	40.0	40.0
Extra-light Amber	37.0	37.0
Light Amber	36.0	36.0
Amber	35.0	34.0
Nontable	33.0	33.0

The levels are unchanged from those announced April 20, 1989. Producers who redeem their honey pledged as loan collateral by repaying their 1988 or 1989 honey-price support loans at these levels may not repledge the same honey as collateral for another loan.

Jane K. Phillips (202) 447-7601 8:00 am-4:30 pm EST
John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207 4:30 pm-5:30 pm EST

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